

# HOW TO CHANGE YOUR NAME (for an Adult)

## Who can ask the court for a name change?

To change your name you **MUST**:

- Be at least 18 years old; AND
- Have lived in Illinois for at least 6 months.

You **CAN NOT** change your name if you have been convicted of:

- A felony and have not been pardoned or you finished your sentence less than 10 years ago; OR
- Identity theft or aggravated identity theft and have not been pardoned; OR
- Felony or misdemeanor: criminal sexual abuse when the victim at the time is under 18 years of age, sexual exploitation of a child, indecent solicitation of a child, or indecent solicitation of an adult, or any other offense that requires you to register as a sex offender, and have not been pardoned.

## What forms do I need to fill out to change my name?

- **Request for Name Change:** gives the court the information needed to decide if you can change your name. A person who knows you must also sign the form.
- **Notice of Filing a Request for Name Change:** tells the public you are asking the court to change your name and is published in a newspaper for 3 weeks.
- **Order for Name Change:** is used by the judge to say your *Request for Name Change* is granted or denied.

## What costs will I need to pay to change my name?

- **Filing Fee:** to file your forms with the Circuit Clerk.
- **Publication Fee:** to put your notice in the newspaper.
- **Certified Copy Fee:** if your name change is granted and you need certified copies of the court order.

If you cannot afford these fees, you may apply for a fee waiver with the court.

## What do I do after I fill out the forms?

### Step 1 – File the forms with the court.

- You must file the forms in the county where you live.
- Find the courthouse in the county where you live: [www.illinoiscourts.gov/circuitcourt/circuitmap/map1.asp](http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/circuitcourt/circuitmap/map1.asp)
- Make 3 extra copies of each form and bring them to the Circuit Clerk at the courthouse with the originals.
- The Circuit Clerk will give you a hearing date and time. Write them on the *Notice of Filing a Request for Name Change*. Make sure the hearing date is at least 8 weeks after the date you file the forms at court.
- The Circuit Clerk will stamp and keep the original forms. Have the Circuit Clerk also stamp the extra copies of your forms.
- Pay the filing fee or ask the court for a fee waiver.
- **Note:** You may be able to file online. Check your local Circuit Clerk's website to see if online filing is an option. Find your Circuit Clerk's website at: <http://www.ilcourtclerks.org/illinois-court-clerks/>.

### Step 2 – Publish your *Notice of Filing a Request for Name Change* in a newspaper in the county where you live once a week for 3 weeks in a row.

- Contact a newspaper in your county and set up publication of the notice.
- If there is no newspaper in your county, contact a convenient newspaper published in Illinois.
- Give a copy of the *Notice of Filing a Request for Name Change* to a newspaper.
- The notice must appear in a newspaper for the first time at least 6 weeks before your hearing date.
- Newspapers may charge you a publication fee.

### Step 3 – Get a Certificate of Publication from the newspaper and file it with the court.

- After the notice appears in a newspaper for 3 weeks get a Certificate of Publication from the newspaper.
- Ask the newspaper how you will get the Certificate of Publication. The newspaper will either:
  - Send the Certificate directly to the Circuit Clerk;
  - Mail the Certificate to you; OR
  - Tell you to pick up the Certificate in person.
- Take the Certificate of Publication to the courthouse and file it with the Circuit Clerk before your court date.
- If the newspaper sends the Certificate directly to the Circuit Clerk, make sure it arrives before your court date and ask the newspaper to send you a copy.

### Step 4 – Go to your court hearing.

- Get to the court 45 minutes before your hearing time.
- Bring these items to your court hearing:
  - Photo I.D.;
  - Stamped copies of: *Request for Name Change*, *Notice of Filing a Request for Name Change*, and *Certificate of Publication*;
  - *Order for Name Change*; AND
  - Other papers related to your *Request* (like papers showing that at least 10 years have passed since completion and discharge of your sentence).
- Confirm the court room number and go to that room.
- Check in quietly with the judge's clerk, court assistant, or court bailiff. Wait for your name and case number to be called.
- You may be placed under oath, answer the judge's questions truthfully.
- The judge will either GRANT or DENY your *Request*. The judge will write this on the Order and sign it.
- File the signed Order with the Circuit Clerk.
- If GRANTED, get certified copies of the Order from the Circuit Clerk. You need a certified copy of the Order to change your name on records like birth certificate, social security card, and a driver's license.
- There may be a fee for the certified copies.

Find Illinois Supreme Court approved forms at: <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/>.